



TOWN OF MANSFIELD
OFFICE OF THE YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU

Patricia Michalak, MA
Youth Service Bureau Coordinator

YSB Advisory Minutes
Tuesday, April 10, 2012
12:00 noon @ Mansfield Town Hall
Conf. Rm. B

Board Members

Present:

Ethel Mantzaris, Chair
Patricia Michalak, YSB Coordinator
Kevin Grunwald, Human Services Director
Frank Perrotti, Resident
Kelsey Campbell, Social Work student
Chuck Leavens, E O Smith Counselor
Eileen Griffin, Resident

Guest:

Anne Plumley, Reverend of First Community Church of Storrs

I. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 12:03 PM by Chair, Ethel Mantzaris

II. Approval of minutes

- Meeting minutes from March 13, 2012 were accepted.

III. Reports

- Director's Report - Kevin Grunwald
 - o The Town Manager's budget was submitted to the Town Council on March 26. the goal to analyze the need for a new position for YSB was removed. It will be added as a service improvement request as part of the budget process in January 2013. Staff will be meeting with the Assistant to the Town Manager and the Director of Finance to identify how we can begin this process now.
 - The Advisory Board requested that the Assistant to the Town Manager be invited to the next board meeting to discuss the removal of the goal to explore need for a new position.

- Worked with the YSB Coordinator to review the current budget status and revise budget line items as we approach the end of the fiscal year. A revised spending plan was developed to include:
 - New furniture for YSB offices to maximize utilization of space.
 - Proposed mileage reimbursement for COPE volunteers.
 - Temporary employment of individuals to support administration of year-end programming.
- Coordinator's Report - Patricia Michalak

Enhancement Grant - Provided by the State Department of Education, this grant has enabled us to support our volunteers and reinforce parents' and children's efforts in participation of our programs. Through this grant, we have funded end of the year gifts for our student and professional volunteers, t-shirts for Cope participants, and gas cards for the participants of our Parent Group.

Coming to an End - Grief Matters, the five week support group came to an end on March 25th. Our mentor Big Friends has also ended for the school year. This program would not be successful without the volunteers' efforts, and the families were very appreciative of their time.

Joy Program – 6 families were given the opportunity to see the very popular show. The Magic School Bus.

S.T.A.A.R. Program – YSB staff met with Christine Lee, a Special Education Teacher at E.O. Smith to learn more about the S.T.A.A.R. Program in efforts to gain knowledge on how help students transition. S.T.A.A.R. stands for Students Transitioning Age Appropriate Routes. The mission of the program is to provide opportunities for 18-21 year old students to continue their learning and enhance social relationships with collaboration of University students who are interested in working and building relationships with students with learning disabilities. Through these relationships, S.T.A.A.R. students gain knowledge and experience to help them transition into the world.

YSB Recognition- We are still receiving lots of positive feedback from the Volunteer recognition. Thanks to Mark LaPlaca from the Board of Education, we will be having the photos from the Patch article printed and framed for our office. The Chronicle will also be running an article on Mansfield Youth Services with descriptions of our programs and the names of volunteers who help make these programs possible.

Grandparent Raising Grandchildren – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is celebrating its 25 year anniversary this year. The group started in 1986 with 4 sets of grandparents, two of which still attend the group. The original group has now grown to a core group of 10 and we have a mailing list of over 40. Of particular concern to this group are advocacy issues, such as grandparent visitation rights, foster parenting vs. adoption rights, and rates of reimbursements for fostering vs. adoption. This month, the group met with local representative Gregg Haddad to discuss current bills

in legislation in support of grandparent rights as well as advocate for their personal concerns and struggles in regards to guardianship, adoption, financial assistance, and health care for their grandchildren.

Challenge Program – YSB staff is in the process of collaborating with MMS counselors in selecting potential participants for this summer's program.

IV. Old Business

- Advisory Board Members Presentation to Town Counsel
 - o The Advisory Board is organizing a presentation on Mansfield Youth Services roles within the community and the growing need for their services. Kevin Grunwald will arrange a date for the Advisory Board to present in early June.

V. New Business

- o September marks the 25th anniversary of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Group. Kevin Grunwald will contact the Town Council about adding the group to the agenda and issuing a proclamation for their dedicated service to the community.

VI. Other

- o The Advisory Board welcomed guest Anne Plumley to this month's meeting. Ms. Plumley is a reverend at the First Community Church of Storrs and expressed an interest in learning more about services that are available to youth in the community. Both Ms. Plumley and the Advisory Board look forward to future collaborative efforts to provide services to youth and teens within the community.

VII. Adjournment

- Next meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 8, 2012
- Meeting adjourned at 12:48 PM
- Minutes submitted by Kelsey Campbell